

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5319

S E C R E T AMMAN 5395

NODIS

FOR NEA/ATHERTON FROM PICKERING

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, JO, US

SUBJECT: AIR DEFENSE, HAWK SALE

REF: AMAN 5187

1. AFTERNOON AUGUST 8, PRIME MINISTER RIFAI TALKED WITH ME BY PHONE ABOUT ONE ASPECT OF HAWK SALE. HE SAID THAT A PRESS SOURCE (NOT OTHERWISE IDENTIFIED) ASKED KING DURING RECENT INTERVIEW WHY GOJ HAD NOT PURSUED SALE COMMERCIALY AND AVOIDED NELSON AMENDMENT.

2. JORDANIANS WERE NOT SURE WHAT HE WAS TALKING ABOUT, AND RIFAI DID NOT GIVE ME KING'S ANSWER, BUT ASKED WHAT WAS THE POINT. I EXPLAINED THAT TECHNICALLY COMMERCIAL SALES ARE HANDLED DIFFERENTLY BEFORE CONGRESS THAN FMS. BUT THAT IN LAST ANALYSIS CONGRESS STILL HAS BLOCKING POWER. I SAID THAT LATER I WOULD SIT DOWN WITH HIM AND DISCUSS THESE POINTS IN MORE DETAIL. HE THEN SAID, "SO WE STILL HAVE AN OPTION OPEN IF CONGRESS WERE TO BLOCK THE SALE UNDER THE PRESENT PROCEEDINGS?" I SAID THAT YES TECHNICALLY THIS WAS TRUE, BUT THERE WERE ALSO SOME POLITICAL REALITIES THAT WE HAD TO CONSIDER, AND IN ANY EVENT, NOW WAS NOT THE TIME TO

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SHIFT THE SALE FROM FMS TO COMMERCIAL TERMS. HE AGREED WITH

LATTER POINT. LATER, I TALKED WITH BIN SHAKER, WHO TOLD ME HE HAD BEEN WITH RIFAI DURING THE CALL, ALONG THE SAME LINES.

3. THIS PROVIDES AN OPENING FOR ME TO EXPLORE INFORMALLY WITH RIFAI SOME OF THE MORE COMPLEX ASPECTS OF THE PARILAMENTARY AND LEGAL SITUATION WITH THE CONGRESS. I HAVE AVOIDED DOING THIS THUS FAR BECAUSE OF THE NEED WHICH I FELT ON COMING BACK NOT TO BE IN A POSITION OF APPEARING TO SUGGEST OR ASK FOR ANY CHANGES IN THEIR PRESENT POSTURE. I DO NOT OF COURSE INTEND TO DO SO NOW, BUT I CAN ALSO AVOID APPEARING TO DO SO AS WELL WITH THIS OPENING FROM RIFAI. THEY HAVE, AS YOU KNOW, MADE CLEAR TO ME THAT THEY ALREADY HAVE "FELT" A LOT OF PRESSURE FROM US.

4. FOR BACKGROUND HERE, IT WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL IN DESCRIBING THE PRESENT SITUATION, TO HAVE AN ANSWER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO MY INQUIRY (REFTEL PARA 20A) ABOUT WHETHER THE ISSUE UNDER NELSON AMENDMENT CAN COME UP DIRECTLY ON SENATE FLOOR IF IT IS BLOCKED IN SFRC. ALSO, CAN STATE LAWYERS CONFIRM FOR US SOON THAT COMMERCIAL SALES OF HAWKS TO JORDAN WOULD HAVE TO BE REPORTED TO THE CONGRESS UNDER SECTIONS 657 (3) AND (4) OF THE FAA OF 1961 AS AMENDED AND UNDER SECTION 414 OF THE MUTUAL SECURITY ACT OF 1954 AS AMENDED AND WOULD THEREFORE BE SUBJECT TO WHATEVER SORT OF LEGISLATION CONGRESS MIGHT DETERMINE TO USE AT SOME FUTURE TIME TO BLOCK DELIVERIES. PICKERING

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